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FOR ATHERTON

FOL TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO AMMAN CAIRO DAMASCUS MOSCOW

USUN NEW YORK DTD 26 FEB 1976 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1423

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, IS, US

SUBJECT: "SENIOR SOURCE" ON ISRAELI/U.S. POLITICAL UNDER-
STANDINGS AND PROSPECTS OF WAR IN 1976

REFS: (A) TEL AVIV 1412, (B) TEL AVIV 1413

1. DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE SEEN THAT ISRAELI PRESS FEBRUARY 26
FEATURES FRONT PAGE REPORTS OF BACKGROUND STATEMENTS BY
"SENIOR SOURCE" REGARDING ALLEGED U.S. - ISRAELI UNDERSTANDING
ON A) THE MEANING OF "TERMINATION OF THE STATE OF WAR",
B) IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING AGREEMENT ON THIS BASIS WITH EGYPT,
JORDAN AND SYRIA, AND C) EXTENT OF ISRAEL WITHDRAWALS FOR
SUCH AGREEMENTS (TEL AVIV 1412). ACCORDING TO ISRAELI
TELEVISION, "SENIOR SOURCE" CHARACTERIZED THESE UNDERSTANDINGS
AS MAJOR POLITICAL ACHIEVEMENT FOR ISRAEL, PARTICULARLY SINCE
SYRIAN POLICY MAY BRING MIDDLE EAST TO BRINK OF WAR IN
CONNECTION WITH OR AFTER EXPIRATION OF UNDOF MANDATE. SOURCE
EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE FOR ISRAEL OF HAVING CONVINCED
U.S. THAT IT HAS DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PROMOTE
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PEACE PROSPECTS IF THIS EVENTUALLY DEVELOPS.

2. DCM ASKED AMOS EIRAN, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, ABOUT IDENTITY OF "SENIOR SOURCE." AFTER A PAUSE, IRAN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT RABIN HAD MADE BACKGROUND PRESENTATION ON WHICH THESE STORIES WERE BASED. DCM THEN OBSERVED THAT IT WAS NOT AMBASSADOR'S INTERPRETATION OF WASHINGTON TALKS THAT U.S. AND ISRAEL HAVE REACHED SUCH "UNDERSTANDING" AS SUGGESTED BY RABIN'S ANALYSIS. EIRAN REPLIED THAT THIS WAS CORRECT, AND THAT PRESS REPORTS WERE ONLY THEIR AUTHOR'S INTERPRETATION.

3. COMMENT: RABIN HAS NOT HAD A LUCK HAND RECENTLY AT HIS BACKGROUNDERS AND HIS STAFF HAS HAD TO ISSUE SUBSEQUENT CLARIFICATIONS. TODAY'S PRESS REPORTS WILL HARDLY DISPEL MOOD OF SKEPTICISM IN WHICH ISRAELI PUBLIC APPROACHES REPORTS OF "UNDERSTANDING" BETWEEN U.S.AND ISRAEL. TOON UNQTE KISSINGER

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